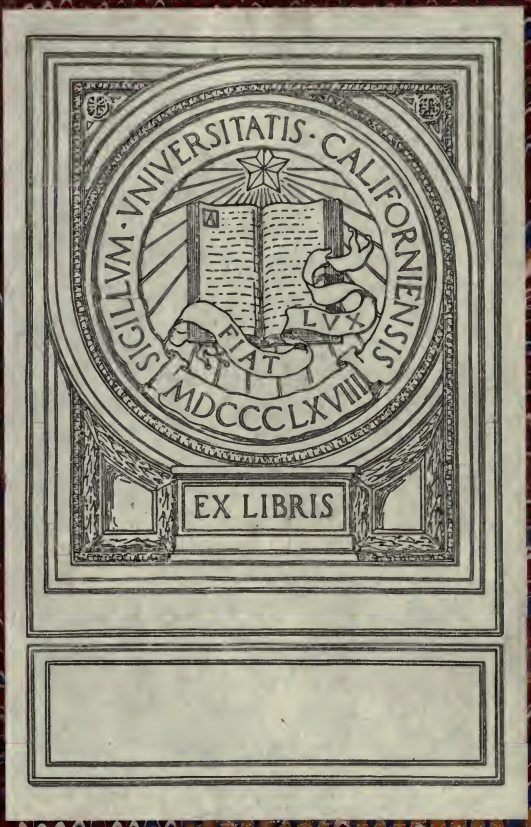
UC-NRLF
B 3 046 349

John Eustace Grubbe.


SIGILLVM · VNIVERSITATIS · CALIFORNIENSIS
LVX
FIAT
MDCCCLXVIII
EX LIBRIS

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2007 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

http://www.archive.org/details/workwageslecture00ouvrrich

2

WORK AND WAGES.

A Lecture,

DELIVERED IN

THE PARISH SCHOOL-ROOM,

NOVEMBER 17TH, 1871,

BY

REV. P. T. OUVRY, M.A.,

Trinity College, Cambridge,

AND VICAR OF WING, NEAR LEIGHTON BUZZARD.

LONDON:

PRINTED BY

RICHARD BARRETT AND SONS, 13, MARK LANE.

1872.

PRICE 1s.

16

LONDON:
R. BARRETT AND SONS, PRINTERS,
MARK LANE.

7

PREFACE.

It is customary in the parish of Wing to have entertainments of Music and Reading, and Popular Lectures, in the School Room, on alternate Friday evenings during the winter season. This, the first lecture for the season 1871-72, is printed as being on a subject concerning which much misapprehension prevails.

WORK AND WAGES.

Men live by work. Work is paid for by wages; and wages purchase all the necessaries of life. The word "wages" generally signifies the remuneration of one sort of men who are paid for their work by others who employ them; but I wish to use it as descriptive of the income, from whatever source derived, on which all men live.

The beasts of the field feed on the natural produce of the earth, or on each other. Savage men do little more, they live by hunting. It is only the more advanced nations of the world who maintain themselves by systematic industry.

The first elements of civilisation are seen in the practice of barter. One man wants what another has; he induces him to part with it by offering something acceptable in exchange. But experience and reflection lead to the conviction that direct exchange or barter is a very inconvenient practice. It is, indeed, quite incompatible with division of labour carried to any extent; and without division of labour the economy of production, necessary for the maintenance of a numerous population, is impossible.

The wants of men are so many, that each man working by himself would supply them very badly. You can fancy what a man could do, and how wretchedly off he would be, if he were put down on a piece of ground, and were told: "If you cultivate this ground properly, you can obtain from it all you require in the way of food and clothing and lodging. You can make corn grow there, which you can transform into bread; you can bring up cattle there, which will supply you with meat and milk, butter and cheese; you can dig clay there, make bricks and build houses; you can plant trees, cut planks, furnish your house, and fit it with all needful conveniences." It would be all very well to tell a man this, and in theory it would be quite true, but in practice this man would starve. What then is the more reasonable method of proceeding? The state of things I would describe has not been established all at once; it has prevailed by degrees, and the steps which have led to it are various, some not altogether justifiable, yet the result is this:—no man now attempts by his own industry to make all he wants. He cannot with any advantage turn his hand to so many things: he would do all things badly, and be so slow about each operation, that the year would come to an end, and find the greater part of

20

his work undone. So each man now undertakes one department of labour. One man possesses land, and undertakes to put on that land the buildings, and perform other works, making that land suitable for the occupation of another man, whom we call a farmer. The farmer gives to the owner of the land a certain sum of money for its use, and for the use also of all the expensive additions which have been made to it in the form of buildings, drainage, fencing, roads, and so on. That which the farmer pays to the landowner may be called the wages by which the landowner lives. It is commonly called rent, but I do not wish to confuse your minds by a variety of terms; I only wish you to remark, that for whatever a man does, or for whatever he has, he may get some advantage to himself by which he may live.

The farmer who cultivates the land must also possess many things absolutely necessary for success. He must have instruments of agriculture, machines of different kinds, and he must employ labourers. He thus makes use of the land, sells its produce, pays the landowner rent, and lives by the profit he makes. The rent is the landowner's wages, the profits are the farmer's wages, and the labourer who agrees to help the farmer in cultivating the land receives from him a weekly sum of money, which is his wages. Rent, profit, wages, are then three names pointing out the remuneration different men receive for that which they have, or use, or allow to be used.

Thus you see there is, first, a bargain between the landowner and the farmer, the result of which is, the payment of a fair price for the use of the land. There is, secondly, a bargain between the farmer and the persons who are ready to buy the produce of the land, the result of which, when the expenses of cultivation are paid, is the farmer's profit; thirdly, there is a bargain between the farmer and the men who have labour to sell, the result is, a certain price paid for labour, which forms the labourer's wages.

In civilised nations all men do not live directly by the land. The direct profit or wages to be obtained by the possession, or the occupation, or by the labour on land, is not nearly so great as the similar returns to be obtained in what is called manufacturing industry. The men so engaged must, however, eat and drink; they want bread and meat, they are excellent customers to the farmer; but in such industry both employer and employed are separate and apart from the land, they live in towns where no land is, except what forms the sites of houses and manufactories. There the products of the soil are worked up into useful things, by men who have stored up savings, who invest those savings in expensive buildings and machinery, and who agree with labourers to work for them at wages more or less according to the nature of the work to be performed, and the number of persons able to perform it.

These men live in towns. Consider then how important towns are in the economy of a kingdom or country. London contains 3,000,000 people, as many as are contained in the whole country of Scotland. London does not produce anything suitable for the food, clothing, or habitations of the people. The corn and cattle for bread and meat, the wool and cotton for clothing, the bricks, stone, and wood for houses, all come out of the country, from our fields and pastures, our mines, forests, and quarries. Yet the country would be badly off without the towns; the townspeople are the great customers to the country people, they virtually supply the greater portion of the rents, profits, and wages which country people receive.

In primitive ages there were no towns, men lived on the produce of the land, and there was little over that which the cultivator wanted for his own use. Some men now desire to return to this state of society; they think men would be happier if each family were planted on its own plot of ground, and lived by its cultivation, all working to till the ground and making at home the few and simple articles of clothing required by their actual needs. These descriptions of primitive simplicity strike the imagination; they are poetical and suitable for pictures, but in real life they belong to a past age, which never can return; and rightly understood, the modern method of procedure is far more advantageous to all. I need only mention this one fact, which alone makes it impossible to return to such a state of society; under such a system the people in towns must starve, for the country people would be quite unable to supply their wants. It is only by scientific cultivation, aided by ever increasing and improved machinery, that the people in a populous country can live at all. We hear, indeed, of the prosperity of the United States of America; we read that men can live better there than they can here. It is true they can, but why? There, for every thirty men we in England have on a given piece of land, they have but one. In other words, their population is about the same as ours, but their land is thirty times as large; they have thirty acres per head for our one acre per head. It is easy to perceive, then, that we cannot live in this country without the strictest regard to economy, while they can afford the losses of wars, and fires, and other calamities with far greater ease.

There was a time in this country when, instead of thirty millions, there were but three. In those "good old times," as some call them, there were civil wars, and famines, and pestilences, and neither in health nor in comfort did the people live so well as they do now. If knowledge was spread abroad as it ought to be, the reasons men now have for contentment are greater than ever before. Not that I deny the many evils of present society, not that I deprecate strenuous exertion for the improvement of the condition

of the people. Much, I acknowledge, has still to be done in the way of education, to enable the bulk of the people to know what they have to do in order to an improved condition of life.

I have said, that at the first beginnings of civilisation, the business of mankind was carried on by a system of barter. One man exchanged that which he happened to have for something which he wanted belonging to another man; this was a clumsy and very inconvenient mode of proceeding. So soon as the division of labour, the source of all economical business, was commenced, the need of what we call money was felt, and was supplied. It is evidently convenient that everything man requires should have a price put on it. This price is represented by some well-known thing, which all can use and understand; something which can be measured and weighed, little liable to variation in value, easily moved, and not easily destroyed. Such is money. Many things have been used as money; oxen and sheep, shells and seeds. In old times, in the celebrated history of the Trojan war, as related by the poet Homer, the armour of the warriors was valued in oxen. A costly suit of armour was said to be worth one hundred oxen, and so on. But we should find oxen or even sheep exceedingly inconvenient as money, for purposes of trade. By common consent, therefore, what are called the precious metals have been employed for the purpose. Gold, silver, and copper, of a certain size and weight, certified by the Government of each country by a stamp, are now used. The price of anything we want to buy or sell is measured by so many pounds, shillings, and pence. Thus, every man's rent, or profits, or wages, are some fixed sum of money, which the respective bargainers agree upon. No man who has anything to exchange need now wait till he finds a neighbour with something he wants, and willing to take that which he desires to dispose of; he parts with it for money, and with that money he purchases anything he requires. Rent and profits and wages are then so much money due to the landlord, or merchant, or workman. The business of life and the various transactions between man and man are satisfactorily accomplished by this simple and most useful contrivance.

But how is the value of things fixed? How do we know what money should be given for any article? The bargainings of the market, or some similar process in every case, manage this. If there are more buyers than sellers, the price rises; if there are more sellers than buyers, prices fall. This is a principle of universal application, it is at the root of all the business of human life; the more the principle can have fair and full play, the better it is for mankind. I say this because there are in practice many hindrances in the way of its full play; many impediments in the way of free trade which, if they cannot be altogether removed,

should be rendered as few and small as possible. In making a fair bargain the parties should be on equal terms; but sometimes one man knows more than another, and this gives him an advantage. Again, some employments are easier or pleasanter than others; more men take to them; their money value falls. The numbers seeking such employments increase beyond the present demand; the price paid for labour in this way is diminished.

Now it must be observed, that when two persons bargain for anything whatever, the one who wants to sell is anxious to raise the price, the one who wants to buy tries to diminish the price. Landowners would raise their rents if they could get substantial tenants content and ready to pay an increased sum. Farmers and tradesmen would obtain higher prices for their goods if the demand for them increased. Labourers would obtain higher wages if they were more skilful and industrious to do more work than they now do, or if the demand for labour were greater than it is, and the supply of labourers was not increased. It is important that you should keep in mind that supply and demand are at the root of the value of everything on which a price can be put. It is not merely the amount of labour expended, for a man may work all day long on something which nobody wants, and will get nothing for all his labour; while another man, who, with very trifling expenditure of labour, finds a jewel or precious stone, as is oftentimes the case in many parts of the world, gets as high a price for it as if it had cost him the labour of a life.

In many parts of the world men go to dig the precious metals; men often become suddenly rich from happening to hit on a productive spot; yet on the whole, and in the long run, these men do not earn so much as those who profitably employ themselves in cultivating the ground. For one man who gains much, ninety-nine gain very little; and the general effect of an increased supply of gold is to make the price of everything higher—a circumstance not very desirable for the world at large. Any man who finds out a way of making food and raiment and houses, cheaper and better, does more good to mankind than all the gold and diamond diggers on the face of the earth.

But we must not lose sight of our proper subject, "work and wages"; what a man does, and what he receives for doing it. Rent, profit, and wages are, I repeat, three names commonly used, but they are all different forms of remuneration for something or other that a man has to sell. Rent is given for the use of land; profit is obtained by cultivating land, or by changing its produce into other forms more useful for customers; wages are for the work done either in cultivating the land, or in the various manufactures which deal with its productions.

Let us now go back from the customer to the various persons

who supply his wants, in order to make our subject clear in all its bearings. A man goes into a baker's shop, and purchases a shilling's worth of bread. But what does this shilling mean? The baker of course has a part of it as the profits of his business, on which he lives; and part goes to the men employed by the baker, and to keep up the implements of his trade. Out of it, too, a part goes to the man from whom the baker purchases his flour; the miller has to make his profits, and he has also to pay the price of the corn he buys. So a part goes to the farmer who grows the corn, and this part includes the farmer's profit. The rest of the shilling in the farmer's hands goes to the landlord whose land he uses, in the form of rent, and to the labourer who works for him, in the shape of wages. So every shilling paid to the baker is divided between the baker, the miller, the farmer, the landlord, and the labourer. And how much of this shilling each of the several parties receives depends on the bargains they respectively make with each other. You cannot fix these quantities by any law or rule, the freedom of the market is the security of the customers, the best guarantee which all the parties concerned can obtain that rents, profits, and wages shall be fairly adjusted. High rents, great profits, increased wages, make dear bread; low rents, low profits, low wages, make cheap bread. I do not speak of favourable or unfavourable seasons making better or worse harvests, for these are an element in the question in a great measure beyond human control. A good and abundant harvest, or the contrary, makes bread cheap or dear. Yet this is quite independent of the bargains which the different parties concerned make with each other. So far as these are concerned, cheapness in the elements of production, low rents, low profits, and low wages, make cheap bread. This principle, though involved in more complicated forms, is the true explanation of the prices you have to give for everything you use. A house, for instance, is cheap when the materials and labour by which it is constructed are cheap, and so on with everything else.

I have spoken of work and wages, but I have not yet mentioned a word which is very frequently used in connection with labour; I mean "capital." You often hear it said that there is a contest between capital and labour, and that capitalists, men possessed of capital, are in a position of antagonism to labourers. It is most desirable that you should know what "capital" means; there is no mystery about it; call it by a more familiar name and you will see that there is nothing wonderful in it at all. It is nothing else but "savings." Every man who saves something out of his wages, putting it into a bank till it becomes a substantial sum, is possessed of capital—he is a capitalist. You must be aware that many, I may say most, of the large capitalists are men who have raised themselves from a low origin where they worked for weekly wages. It

is true that the sons of these men inherit their fathers' savings, and so some men are capitalists who have not made themselves so. Yet the way in which capitalists are made is this. Two young men earn, say, a pound a week. The one marries early, spends all his wages, lives his life and does not improve his condition. The other, more prudent, delays his marriage; as a single man he can live on little if he chooses; he lays by most of his wages, he gets together a sum of money. He then finds that he can undertake to do more work than he can perform with his own hands; he is able to associate another man with him, whose wages he pays out of his earnings. But when a man employs a labourer he looks to obtain a profit over and above the wages he pays. So this man goes on saving out of his own wages, to which he can add the profits he obtains by being able to employ another labourer. By and by he is in a position to undertake larger works; he employs several labourers; his savings out of his own wages, and his profits also saved, increase his capital. At length he finds that his own wages are inconsiderable when compared with the profit he obtains by employing labour. It is now more advantageous to him to occupy his time in superintending the work of his labourers, directing their exertions, and in considering what fresh work is open to him, and so on. He has now become an employer—a capitalist. And as the prudent, thoughtful habits, with which he began life, continue with him, he becomes a rich man; he can marry, bring up a family, without spending all his earnings, as his companion, who began life with him, still does. Such is the way in which men in the different walks of life rise out of the position in which they were born, become rich—"capitalists." Capital, then, is the fruit of industry, skill, and prudence. It is the source from which wages are paid; and if capital in a country becomes less, employment is diminished, many labourers are out of work, or the amount of wages is smaller. And if by any revolution, or calamity, capital should be seriously and suddenly destroyed, distress, and even famine, would overspread the land.

Let me give you another illustration of the way in which capital, that is, the money possessed by individuals, plays its part in the economy of life. You sometimes hear it said, that there are more labourers in this country than can find work. I am by no means sure that this is true. I am rather inclined to think that it is not true of the country at large, though in some places, where men are ignorant and timid, they will not move off to the districts where employment is plentiful. But however this be, one of the remedies proposed for this real or supposed superabundant labour is emigration. It is well known that by far the largest part of the earth on which we live is uncultivated. Millions and millions of acres, fit to provide food for men, are untouched. And most of

26

the newer countries, such as the United States of America, have, on the same quantity of land, only about one man for our thirty. In the American States, the people will have to increase thirtyfold before the country will be as thickly peopled as this country is. But there as here, there are rich and poor, capitalists and labourers; and the same principles which regulate the condition of the different classes of men act as they do here. It may be advantageous for an industrious man to emigrate to such a country; but let him recollect that the same qualities which are necessary for his well-being here, are equally necessary there. It is very seldom that a prudent, sober, skilful, industrious labourer cannot get constant employment in this country; the same man would get on well in a foreign country. Idle, intemperate, and careless workmen would equally be in poverty and distress abroad as at home.

But we are illustrating the use and even the necessity of capital for the welfare of the people. Suppose a thousand men were to be landed on the most fertile island in the world, with a climate and soil fitted to produce in abundance everything good for the use of man; why, these men would starve in a short time. But suppose one of these thousand men was a capitalist, and took out in the ship all the tools, materials, and provisions needful to support himself and his companions for a considerable time; and suppose when he landed he hired all the men to work on the land, setting some to build houses out of the materials he brought out, others to plough and sow the ground, and to do all the other works which such a community would immediately require; supplying them all in the meantime with necessary food and clothing. Why, then, it is easy to see that in the course of years these men would all be employed in various useful ways; a division of labour would spring up among them. The man who supported them all at first, would have enabled them at length to support themselves. Yet the capital which this man brought out with him would not be lost: the men would live by what they earned, their labour would restore the capital expended in their maintenance, and there would be enough added to it to continue to maintain not only them, but many more who would be born to them. The capitalist would reap the profit of his capital, and the men would live by their wages. But without the capital, the men would have earned nothing; and on the other hand, without the industry of the men the capital would have been spent in vain. For if the men lived on the capital, without working to replace it when it was spent, they would be in the same condition as if they had been landed destitute; they would perish of hunger. Labour feeds capital; but without capital, labour would be unrewarded.

You will say that, as a matter of fact, the great bulk of mankind are men working for moderate wages, while a comparatively few

are possessed of capital, and these few make profits, that is, earn wages out of all proportion to those obtained by daily work. It is indeed true that there are rich and poor in the world, and there always will be, and great extremes of riches and poverty are undoubtedly an evil. But what is the remedy? If men were equally capable, prudent, and industrious, greater equality of condition would be possible. Great poverty generally arises from great misconduct; great riches do not always arise from merit. Well, what can be done? Anything is worthy of consideration, for the improvement of the condition of men, which involves no injustice.

One plan which meets with much favour is known under the name of co-operation, and co-operative societies. Let us see what these mean; they are of two kinds, and I shall best explain them by giving you some instances of their mode of working.

Some years ago coal was very dear in this parish. You recollect that a coal yard was enclosed. Coal trucks were brought direct from the colliery; the owners of waggons and horses drew the coal from the railroad; it was divided into small quantities and sold at cost price. You thus got coal at a cheaper rate than you had been used to get it. The carriage was given, and you also had an abatement of the price, the profit which a retail dealer would have obtained. This was a co-operative society. But it was very troublesome to manage, and at length the coal dealers found it possible to supply you with coal nearly as cheap as you could obtain it from the yard. You gradually ceased to belong to the co-operative society, and the thing came to an end.

Again, you recollect some among you thought that by joining together and setting up a shop of your own, you could get all the common shop goods you required in small quantities at wholesale prices. The principle was sound and sure, but there were certain requirements necessary for success, which demanded the strictest attention. These were ready money, no credit, no debts, careful management not to buy more of any article than could be readily disposed of, that is, no waste. Well, these requirements were, in other words, skill, prudence, economy, self-denial, industry, in short all those qualities which enable a man to get on in the world, as it is said. And these requirements being not always and everywhere forthcoming, the society came to an end. Yet some societies of this kind have met with a considerable measure of success. They all depend on this principle. Usually, as I have said, one man who has capital sets a number of men to work, paying them wages; the produce of this labour, after all the wages are paid and all the expenses of the establishment discharged, forms the profit of the employer. In a large manufacture one man employs many labourers. Now if a number of prudent labourers, having carefully laid by what they could spare, join their savings together, this may

form a sufficient capital to set up a manufacture. If they then find one among their number skilful enough to take the management, the others working as they would do under an employer, it may be that each man will receive, in addition to the customary amount of wages, his share of the profits of the manufacture in which they are all engaged. The company or society, if successful, will as labourers earn wages, and as capitalists have profits. As the men are mutually responsible, they may be expected all to do their best. Yet they incur all the risks which are incidental to trade and manufactures. There may be not only no profit to divide, but there may be losses, which will have to be subtracted from the customary amount of weekly wages. Still such a method gives a feeling of greater interest in the welfare of the concern, and, as I have said, there are several associations constituted on this principle in successful operation. The great difficulty is management, the danger of downfall from there being many masters. It may be expected that when one man has the sole management of a business, and is chiefly interested in its success, that he will put forth such skill, and act with such prudent care, that he will successfully compete with these associated workmen. For associations of this kind must submit to the law of competition. If manufacturers employing labourers send forth goods which are cheaper and better, customers will prefer them. Customers will buy where they can get what they want best and cheapest; they will not take the careless and imperfect work (if, that is, the work be careless and imperfect) of an association, in preference to the better articles of an individual employer of labour. Men should be free to act for themselves as they judge fit. If by self-help, by frugality and industry, a man raises himself to the position of a master, well; if he chooses to join his savings to those of his fellow-workmen, and with them commence a joint business, well too. These things will find their level; if they are sound they will succeed, if they are unsound they will surely fail.

I have thus set forth, as clearly as I could, what may be called the business relations of man to man. This is the framework on which the structure of industrial life is built. But is this all? No more is it all than the beauty and grace of a man or woman is displayed in the skeleton which is the framework of their bodies. If you have ever seen a number of skeletons of men and women, you will know that they are all very much alike. You may say, this belonged to a tall man or woman, this to a shorter person; but you will see little other difference. The same bones are in the same places, the joints are all alike, the mechanism is uniform; yet when these bones are clothed with flesh, what a difference appears! You have now these uniform solid frameworks covered with that which makes their individuality conspicuous. The living man is far

removed from that repulsive unadorned scaffold, which is nevertheless essential to life and motion. If the skeleton is displaced in any part, if a bone is broken, or a joint dislocated, the whole life and well-being of the man is at an end. The skeleton must be rightly framed in order that the man may perform the functions of life. So the economy of social arrangements must be in accordance with the laws of nature. Then may the aspect of the society built upon them be harmonious and pleasing. For the business relations of life are, as it were, the skeleton of society; but there must be that superadded which answers to the flesh, and covers up that which by itself seems hard and repulsive.

It should then be considered what there is to mitigate the hard and stern principles which lie at the root of all successful business. What is there to chasten the severity of a rigid economy? How shall men who are in the daily experience of those competitions which prevail in every department of life, dwell together in peace, harmony, and contentment?

Price, wages, rent, are settled by a sort of contest between different parties; and the result is, when the different parties are on pretty equal terms as to knowledge and intelligence, that the prices, or wages, or rent, are those which are fair and right. And this result so arrived at is for the general good. An adjustment is made which, in every country possessed of free institutions, is as satisfactory as can be obtained. But I have spoken of a contest. Now, in a contest the two parties are opponents; the man who sells wants to raise the price, the man who buys wants to lower it. This relation, of itself, does not bring men together, or bind them with the bonds of love. Competition has a tendency to make classes of all the different sorts of men who buy, and to separate them and keep them apart from others who sell. Tradesmen and customers seem to have separate interests; they are of a different class. Employers and labourers seem, also, to have different interests; they form two antagonistic classes so far as the bargain between them is concerned. So landlords and tenants, masters and workmen, and the rest. What is there then to show all these different classes of men that they have a common interest far greater and more important than their class interests?

This may be shown by the consideration that, though particular men and particular classes of men have their individual and class interests, yet they all depend on the whole on their customers, and their customers are the whole world. There are employers and labourers in agriculture, each having their separate, and in some respects conflicting, interests. But all men eat bread and meat; and so all employed in agriculture depend upon the consumers of these prime necessaries of life. The masters and men, who together conduct any great manufacturing establishment, are

30

also dependent on their customers. The capitalist could obtain no profit, the workman no wages, unless there were people ready to buy the products of their combined exertions. So the consideration that all men have an interest in the cheapest and most abundant supply of all things necessary, is the ultimate motive power to all employment, that which causes rent, profit, and wages to exist.

But beyond all this there is a great principle in the world which should harmonise and render harmless all the conflicting interests of men. I mean the gentle, peaceable, charitable principles of the Christain religion, in its largest sense, as expressed in the words of its great Founder. Words which fall upon the nations of the world with that perfect impartiality which belongs to Him, "who maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." "The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy."

We have shown that the business of this world, in its strict economical principles, is a machine which works according to certain fixed rules and laws. It may be compared to the skeleton of the human frame, which is adapted to perform, in the most perfect manner, the various motions the body requires. But this machine must, as it were, be clothed with flesh in order that it may be an harmonious and beautiful structure, instead of a mere frame of dry bones. Now the parts which make up the business machine of the world are not hard bones, but men and women. When we speak, however, of the principles on which business is conducted, we seem to lose sight of this fact. We speak of capital and labour—so much money used brings in so much profit. The cost of labour is calculated, and whether that labour be done directly by the hands of men or by the iron arms of a machine, is not considered; that is, on strict business principles it is not considered. But more is due to men than this. Men, as wealth-producing machines, are also men with feelings and affections. Men stand in far higher relations to each other than as mere parts of a machine. The men who receive rents, the men who make profits, the men who receive wages, should form an harmonious and admirable structure. Rents, and profits, and wages should be regulated so as to produce the several things which mankind wants, in the best and most abundant manner. The doctrine of supply and demand does, in fact, do this, and some complain of the result. The real ground of complaint is not, however, against the laws and rules by which this result is obtained, but that the fact is more or less ignored, that the men who contribute their several parts to it regard each other only as parts of a hard and fixed machine. They do not see that the remedy for that of which they complain lies not in the alteration of

the machine, but in the recognition of the human and brotherly relations which should exist between men in every department of life. If these kind and Christian relations do not prevail between landlord and tenant, master and workman, then society must always be in a state of war; and the competitions of business will end in a conflict of classes. The evil complained of would not then be removed by any alteration of the machinery, by making it, as it is thought, more simple by the abolition of some of the parts of which it is now constituted. If these ideas were to be realised, it would still be found that industry, skill, prudence, force of character, and some other less amiable qualities, such as unscrupulousness and a strong sense of self-interest, would work, as they now do, much inequality in the condition of men. On the other hand, if the wisdom which is from above fully entered the minds and hearts of all the men now forming the business machine of the world; that machine which causes men in various ways to live by the produce of their labour or professions, which we variously call wages, profit, or rent, would work, in all its parts, in harmony and peace.

I would take the opportunity of remarking here that there is very much work to be done in the world most necessary for the common benefit, which commands no immediate remuneration. Men who live by the immediate remuneration of their labour, whether what they earn be wages or profits, are so fully occupied that they have little time for other things. All that great and wonderful fabric of human industry, which consists in the investigations of science, the pursuits of knowledge, of work concerning the past, present, and future welfare of mankind, depends upon there being in every nation a class of cultivated men, not obliged to work for their living, yet living in order that they may work for the public benefit. Men who live on rents, or on the interest of their money, are not necessarily on that account useless members of society; they have a department of labour which is most essential to the well-being of every nation. If all men were engaged in business, attending to the direct production of wealth, they might all live, it is true; but there would be little progress, little improvement. Science and philosophy may be looked upon with some contempt, especially when it is perceived that philosophers are generally not good men of business; yet by science and philosophy the world becomes wiser and better. The men who study these matters must be at leisure from the distractions of business, and they bear the same relation to other men that the brain of the human body bears to the other members. Nor is it any objection to this assertion that many of this class of men are idle and useless. Among the classes who live by profits or wages, are there not also many found idle and thriftless? Working little, or working badly, forming in fact that pauper class of society which is formed not

only by the men who too easily betake themselves to parish relief, but who are ever calling upon their friends and relations to support them in their idleness. What family is there in the land who cannot count among its members some of this kind of persons—persons dependent more or less all their lives on the work of their more industrious relations?

Two other matters bearing upon work and wages I must mention briefly in conclusion—education and the use of machinery. It is a good thing that the minds of men should be cultivated. It is a disadvantage to a man to be ignorant. Nevertheless, it is a mistake to suppose that the education of the people will materially alter the form of business, by which the wealth of the world is realised. It is true that an educated man has an advantage over the uneducated. And I have heard it said that it is a main object in sending children to school that they may rise in the world. But when *all* are educated, education, as such, will not be a privilege. When all can read and write, as all should, reading and writing will be of no more advantage to any particular man with respect to others, than ability to speak now is; the use of the limbs, the use of the voice, the use of the mind, are all perfected by exercise, by education. But the education of the mind requires special care and means; and when these are provided for the use of all it will have the effect of making men more alike in mental qualifications, and give to all that intelligent perception, both of their own interest and the common welfare, by which they will be able to take their part in the business of life to the greatest advantage. The free bargain between man and man, on which both rent, profit, and wages depend, will not in any way be altered in its nature by reason of the men who are parties to it being all well informed. But society will be more contented and harmonious, men will see more clearly on what their well-being in this world depends; and if some expectations now entertained by ignorant and ill-informed persons prove visionary, the solid foundation of the laws on which society depends will become manifest; and in this, as in every other department of human knowledge, men will see that obedience to natural laws, which are the laws of God, is the only way to the greatest attainable happiness.

The use of machinery to save labour, to do the hard work of the world, is another matter much misunderstood with reference to our present subject. Machines can do much monotonous work, indeed all sorts of work which require no thought; and because men have been in the habit of doing work of this kind, and are displaced by machines, it is argued that machines are an evil. In former times great part of the hard work of the world was done by slaves, by forced labour. The ancient republics of Greece and Rome, often held up to our admiration as models of freedom, really consisted of

33

a few free men with a great number of slaves. When slavery was abolished, and all labour became free, in some parts of the world work very necessary for mankind could scarcely get done at all. In warm climates the necessaries of life are few and easily procured. When men there have earned as much as they want, they will not work any more. One hour's work perhaps daily will enable them to live, and so they will work no longer. In those countries slave labour was valuable, because men were compelled to work all day, whether they liked it or not. Cotton and sugar, both the produce of hot countries, were formerly almost entirely the result of forced labour. Now machinery and free labour do the whole work.

A machine is a slave who has no sense of wrong, who is never tired, who is always ready to work. Although the first introduction of a machine is unquestionably injurious to that class of men whose labour has been displaced by it, yet ultimately, and on the whole, it is a great public benefit. Steam power displaced the hand-loom weavers; railroads displaced the stage coachmen; the threshing machine has abolished the flail, and so on. Yet when there were no machines in this country, except of the most simple description, such as the spade and hoe, the number of people were few and fared badly. The large introduction of machinery of late years has enormously increased the produce of the earth, has made many of the necessaries of life very much cheaper, has caused a far larger population to be employed in work requiring more skill and thought, and therefore better remunerated than that simple routine labour which is best done by a machine. Who is there, whoever saw a steam saw mill, would ask men to do laborious work, which could as well be performed by a machine? Machinery does, and will do still more effectively, all that sort of work which used to be done by ignorant slaves, and the men of civilised nations will one day become really citizens of a free State, relieved from servile work, and yet possessing slaves who will have no cause of complaint against them.

Work and wages in some form or other are then the conditions of human life—conditions from which we cannot escape. We should then try to understand the laws on which they depend, that we may be contented with our position, and know in what direction and with what aims we can seek improvement without injustice to any, and without craving after that which is unattainable.

RETURN TO the circulation desk of any
University of California Library
or to the
NORTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY
Bldg. 400, Richmond Field Station
University of California
Richmond, CA 94804-4698

ALL BOOKS MAY BE RECALLED AFTER 7 DAYS
2-month loans may be renewed by calling
(510) 642-6753
1-year loans may be recharged by bringing books to NRLF
Renewals and recharges may be made 4 days prior to due date

DUE AS STAMPED BELOW

DEC 15 1995

RECEIVED

SEP 27 1995

CIRCULATION DEPT.

RECEIVED

SEP 27 1995

CIRCULATION DEPT.

20,000 (4/94)

FORM NO. DD6, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY
BERKELEY, CA 94720

GENERAL LIBRARY - U.C. BERKELEY

B000886410

871772

AC1
M5
v.1
**

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY